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FM AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8861
INFO RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY 6577
RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO PRIORITY 6888
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA PRIORITY 2187
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD PRIORITY 4928
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 6147
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 2544
RUEHSA/AMEMBASSY PRETORIA PRIORITY 0176
RUEHCI/AMCONSUL KOLKATA PRIORITY 4260
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY 2114
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 3265
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
RHMFISS/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KATHMANDU 000808

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/17/2018

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PINR](#) [NP](#)

SUBJECT: NEPAL: MINOR MADHESI LEADER IS FAVORITE TO BECOME
PRESIDENT

REF: KATHMANDU 697

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Randy W. Berry. Reasons 1.4 (b/d)

Parties Nominate Presidential Candidates

11. (U) In keeping with regulations adopted by Nepal's
Constituent Assembly (CA) on July 15, the parties nominated
their candidates to become the country's first President and
Vice President on July 17. By the 1 p.m. (local time)
deadline, the nominees (all by the four largest parties) were:

-- Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) (CPN-M)

President: Mr. Ram Raja Prasad Singh
Vice President: Ms. Shanta Shrestha

-- Nepali Congress (NC)

President: Mr. Ram Baran Yadav
Vice President: Mr. Man Bahadur Bishwokarma

-- Communist Party of Nepal (United Marxist Leninist) (UML)

President: Mr. Ramprit Paswan
Vice President: Ms. Asta Laxmi Shakya

-- Madhesi People's Rights Forum (MPRF)

President: No candidate
Vice President: Paramananda Jha

Candidates may withdraw prior to 4:30 p.m. The list is to be
finalized at 5:00 p.m. The election itself is scheduled for
11 a.m. to 2 p.m. on July 19. The result is due by 5 p.m.

Biographical Information

12. (SBU)

CPN-M

-- Ram Raja Prasad Singh, a Madhesi, is a veteran republican
leader, and the President of the tiny, left-wing New People's

Front. He was the main architect of the 1985 Kathmandu bombings in which at least two people died.

-- Shanta Shrestha, a Newar, was a Maoist member of the Interim Parliament and is a former Radio Nepal employee. A women's activist and member of the Maoist women's wing, she was arrested in 2003 by the security forces.

NC

-- Ram Baran Yadav, a Madhesi, is the General Secretary of the Nepali Congress, and the most senior NC Madhesi leader. Yadav, who is a medical doctor, won a CA seat from Dhanusa, in the central Terai.

-- Man Bahadur Bishwokarma, a Dalit, is an NC Central Committee member, and was the State Minister for Environment, Science and Technology from 2006-2007, and was a math lecturer.

UML

-- Ramprit Paswan, a Dalit, was elected in 2001 to be the Vice Chairman of the National Assembly (the old upper house of Parliament). He was a member of the Interim Parliament and is a senior UML Dalit leader.

-- Asta Laxmi Shakya, a Newar, is a UML Central Committee member. She was elected in 1999 to the House of Representatives (the old lower house of Parliament) and served in the Interim Parliament. She is married to Amrit Bohara, who is the third-ranking leader in UML. Shakya contested a CA seat from Kathmandu but lost.

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MPRF

-- Parmanananda Jha, a Madhesi, is a former Supreme Court Justice, who resigned after being demoted for a faulty decision in a drug case in 2006. He is currently in charge of the MPRF's legal department.

Comment

13. (C) The stalemate over selection of Nepal's first President looks to be coming to a conclusion. The launch of a competitive race for the Presidency (and Vice Presidency) signals the end of the Maoists' extended effort to persuade the Nepali Congress and, more aggressively, the UML to abandon their support for Prime Minister Koirala and former UML General Secretary M.K. Nepal, respectively. The result is that the Maoists have returned to the candidate they mooted first, Ram Raja Prasad Singh, the elderly head of a Madhesi party that contested the Constituent Assembly election but won no seats. Singh is best known for a deadly, pro-republican bombing campaign in 1985. It is noteworthy that none of the candidates are hill Brahmins, Nepal's traditionally dominant caste group. As the presidential candidate of the Assembly's largest party, Singh is the presumptive favorite. The three major Madhesi parties have indicated in the past that they would support him as a Madhesi. With their support (82 MPs), that of the Maoists (226 MPs) and that of the Maoist-allied People's Front Nepal (9 MPs), he should have more than the simple majority required in the 601-member Assembly -- barring any surprises. BERRY